

CHAPTER 2

TRAINING

This chapter discusses the trainer's role in teaching and sustaining effective hand-to-hand combat. It also discusses unit training, training areas, teaching techniques, and safety precautions that must be considered before conducting combatives training.

Section I. TRAIN-THE-TRAINER

Professional instruction is the key to success in combatives training. Instructors must be physically fit and highly proficient in the demonstration and practical application of the skills. They must review and be familiar with this manual. Confidence, enthusiasm, and technical expertise are essential for success in teaching hand-to-hand combat. Assistant instructors must also be properly trained to help supervise and demonstrate maneuvers. Selecting the trainers is the first step in establishing an effective program.

2-1. RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRAINERS

Diligent effort is needed to perfect the various hand-to-hand combat techniques, to apply them instinctively, and to teach others to safely master them. The following instructor responsibilities are the core of planning and executing combatives training.

- a. Seek maximum efficiency with minimum effort. Continually strive to reduce all unnecessary explanations, movement, and activity. Streamline the training without compromising content, efficiency, or safety.
- b. Stress cooperation and technical mastery. Promote suppleness and controlling aggression.
- c. Reinforce the details of each technique and provide positive feedback when warranted. Use occasional humor to motivate soldiers, but avoid degrading or insulting them.
- d. Ensure serviceable training aids are present in sufficient quantities for all soldiers being trained. Ensure training areas are well maintained and free of dangerous obstructions.
- e. Ensure instructors and assistant instructors are well-rehearsed and prepared before all training sessions. Conduct instructor training at least five hours weekly to maintain a high skill level.
- f. Develop as many skilled combatives instructors for each unit as possible. Instructor-to-soldier ratios should not exceed 1 instructor for 20 soldiers. Encourage after-duty training and education for instructors.
- g. Require strict discipline of all soldiers.

2-2. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

To prevent injuries, the instructor must consider the following safety precautions before conducting combatives training.

- a. Supervise all practical work closely and constantly. Never leave a group unsupervised.

- b. Familiarize the soldiers with each maneuver by a complete explanation and demonstration before they attempt the moves.
- c. Do not allow the soldiers to get ahead of the instruction.
- d. Ensure the training partner offers no resistance, but allows the maneuver to be freely executed during the learning stages and while perfecting the techniques.
- e. Ensure there is adequate space between soldiers during all practical work—for example, allow at least an 8-foot square for each pair of soldiers.
- f. Ensure that soldiers empty their pockets, and remove their jewelry, and identification tags before training.
- g. Stress that only simulated strikes to vital points, such as the head, neck, and groin area are to be executed. Soldiers may use light blows to other vulnerable areas; however, they must exercise caution at all times.
- h. Ensure that soldiers understand the use of both physical tapping and verbal signals to indicate to the partner when to stop the pressure in grappling and choking techniques.
- i. Make sure soldiers warm up and stretch properly before practical work.
- j. Teach and practice falls before conducting throws.
- k. Ensure that the soldier to be disarmed does not place his finger in the trigger guard during rifle and bayonet disarming.
- l. Make sure soldiers keep scabbards on knives and bayonets firmly attached to rifles while learning bayonet disarming methods.
- m. Use bayonet scabbards or rubber knives during knife disarming training.
- n. If utilizing a sawdust pit, inspect all sandbags on retaining wall before conduct of training to ensure that all bags are serviceable, at least 75 percent full, and that the entire retaining wall is covered with sandbags. Any bag placed where personnel are likely to fall will be filled with the same consistency filler as the sawdust in the pit and will also provide a minimum of 6 inches of sawdust.
- o. Maintain a buffer zone of 6 feet from retainer wall and demonstration area during all training, especially training requiring throws and takedowns by students.
- p. Rake the training pit to loosen sawdust and remove all sharp objects. Properly inspect the pit so that all safety hazards are removed before instruction or demonstrations are executed.
- q. Perform inspections of the depth of sawdust with enough time before training to resurface the pit. Remember that new sawdust will need to be raked and inspected for foreign objects that may cause injuries.

Section II. UNIT TRAINING

Entry-level soldiers receive a training base in combatives during basic training and one-station unit training (OSUT). Advanced individual training (AIT) commanders should review the training presented during basic training and, as time permits, expand into the more advanced techniques discussed in this manual. For soldiers to achieve and sustain proficiency levels regular units must incorporate combatives into an organized training program to include situational training exercises (Appendix A).

2-3. BASIC OR ONE-STATION UNIT TRAINING

This is a suggested training program for basic training or OSUT. It is based on ten hours of available training time, divided into five periods of two hours each. Training should start with ground grappling, which is not only easier both to teach and to learn, but also provides a sound base for the more difficult standing techniques. A program should not begin with techniques that will take a long time to master. The result would be almost uniform disillusionment with combatives in general.

a. Period 1 (2 hours).

- Introduction to combatives safety.
- Combat demonstration performed by instructors or trainers to gain attention and to motivate soldiers.
- Warm-ups and stretches.
- Stand up in base.
- Escape the mount by trap and roll.
- Pass the guard.
- Achieve the mount.
- Drill No. 1, 10 to 15 repetitions; escape the mount, pass the guard, achieve the mount, in sequence.
- Escape the mount by shrimp to the guard.
- Escape the mount drill.

b. Period 2 (2 hours).

- Warm-ups and stretches.
- Drill No. 1, ten repetitions.
- Arm push and roll to the rear mount.
- Escape the rear mount.
- Drill No. 2: Arm push and roll to the back mount, escape the back mount.
- Grappling for position, five minutes and then change partners. Repeat for duration of class.

c. Period 3 (2 hours).

- Warm-ups and stretches.
- Drill No. 1, ten repetitions.
- Drill No. 2, ten repetitions.
- Introduction to choking.
- Rear naked choke.
- Cross collar choke from the mount and guard.
- Front guillotine choke.

d. Period 4 (2 hours).

- Warm-ups and stretches.
- Drill No. 1, ten repetitions.
- Drill No. 2, ten repetitions.
- Bent arm bar from the mount and cross mount.
- Straight arm bar from the mount.
- Straight arm bar from the guard.
- Sweep from straight arm bar attempt.

e. **Period 5 (2 hours).**

- Warm-ups and stretches.
- Drill No. 1, ten repetitions.
- Drill No. 2, ten repetitions.
- Review.
- Rules introduction.
- Competition.

2-4. UNIT SUSTAINMENT TRAINING PROGRAM

Command emphasis is the key to a successful combatives program. Combatives training sessions should be regular, and should be included on unit training schedules at company and platoon level.

a. Successful unit combatives programs continue to focus on the core techniques taught in the basic training or OSUT program. Mastery of these moves will result in more proficient fighters than exposure to a large number of techniques will.

b. As the level of proficiency rises the natural progression of moves is as follows:

- Advanced ground grappling.
- Takedowns.
- Strikes and kicks.
- Fight strategy.
- Situational training.

c. Primary trainers should be designated at all levels. Regular training sessions with these trainers will ensure the quality of training at the small unit level.

d. Primary trainers should be of the appropriate rank; for instance, a platoon primary trainer should be a squad leader or the platoon sergeant to ensure that the training actually occurs.

e. Modern combatives allow soldiers to compete safely. To inspire the pursuit of excellence, individual soldiers may compete during organizational day. Leaders may also call squads, sections, or individuals to compete randomly as a method of inspecting training levels. All combatives competitions should be conducted IAW rules established in Appendix B of this manual. However, competition should not become the focus of combatives training, but remain a tool to inspire further training.

Section III. TRAINING AREAS

An advantage of combatives training is that it can be conducted almost anywhere with little preparation of the training area.

2-5. TRAINING FORMATIONS

Formations used for physical training may also be used for combatives training (FM 21-20). If the extended rectangular formation is used, the first and third ranks should face the second and fourth ranks so that each soldier is directly across him a partner.

A large, grassy, outdoor area free of obstructions is suitable for training. Each pair of soldiers should have an 8-foot square training space. When practicing throws or disarming techniques, soldiers need twice the normal interval between ranks. Instructors also pair soldiers according to height and weight.

2-6. MATTED ROOM

Because inclement weather can be a training distracter, the best training area is an indoor, climate-controlled facility with both padded floor and walls. Mats should be sufficiently firm to allow free movement, but provide enough impact absorption to allow safe throws and takedowns.

2-7. PIT CONSTRUCTION

A common area for teaching hand-to-hand combat is a sawdust pit. Sawdust pits are designed to teach throws and falls safely, but are not very suitable for ground fighting. Figure 2-1 shows a training area for 200 soldiers with a sawdust pit surrounding an instructor and a demonstrator platform.

a. To construct the pit, dig out and level an area 50 meters wide, and build a retaining wall at least 24 inches high. The wall can be cinderblocks, sandbags, or dirt if other materials are not available. (To prevent injuries when using a cinderblock retaining wall, cover the wall and the top of the wall with sandbags.) Place a layer of plastic sheeting on the ground to prevent the growth of grass and weeds, and place a sand base up to 12 inches deep on top of the plastic. Then, place a layer of sawdust about 6 inches deep on top of the sand.

b. Build a 14-foot square demonstration area (Figure 2-1) in the center of the pit with the same type of retaining wall described in paragraph a. This area should be large enough for two demonstrators and the primary instructor.

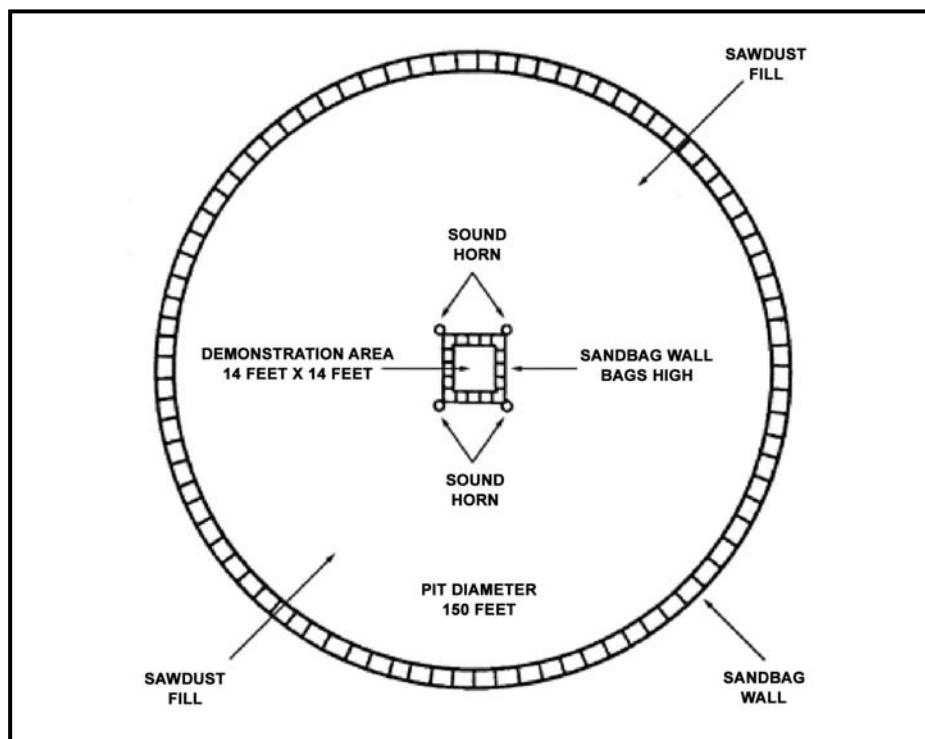


Figure 2-1. Combatives training pit.

2-8. BAYONET ASSAULT COURSE

The bayonet assault course provides the commander a unique training opportunity by allowing soldiers to employ rifle-bayonet fighting skills under simulated combat conditions. The course can be built and negotiated so that demands placed on the soldiers' abilities and on their endurance approach those experienced under combat conditions. Realistic sights and sounds of battle—fire, smoke, confusion, and pyrotechnics—can also be created to enhance realism. The training objectives of the bayonet assault course include:

- Improving rifle-bayonet fighting skills.
- Improving physical fitness and aggressiveness.
- Improving speed, strength, coordination, and accuracy.
- Providing realistic rifle-bayonet fighting under near combat conditions.
- Challenging the soldiers' determination and stamina, which are needed in combat.
- Providing an opportunity for team and squad leaders to develop their leadership and control measures.

a. **Safety.** The safety of the soldiers should be the primary concern of the instructor and his assistants. The best safety aids are constant control and supervision. In addition, instructors should brief soldiers at the beginning of each class on the requirements for safety during rifle-bayonet training. Instructors use the following safety measures:

- (1) Bayonets must be fixed and unfixed only on command.
- (2) Rifles should be grounded near the targets when the soldiers are ordered to move to the instructor's platform for explanations or demonstrations.
- (3) A level surface that does not become slippery when wet should be provided for the training area.
- (4) Left-handed soldiers should be positioned so they are opposite another left-handed soldier when working against the targets. This type of arrangement prevents possible injury when executing a series of movements.
- (5) When using the M16 rifle against a target, the force of contact during the thrust movement may drive the hand gripping the small of the stock into the forward assist assembly (on the right-hand side of the weapon near the stock). To prevent injury to the hand, the soldier must maintain a firm grip on the small of the stock. Gloves should be worn as part of the training uniform when weather dictates.

b. **Layout.** The 300-meter-long course consists of a series of targets to attack, and obstacles to negotiate. Lay it out over natural terrain, preferably rough and wooded areas. Include natural obstacles such as streams, ravines, ridges, and thick vegetation. Build artificial obstacles such as entanglements, fences, log walls, hurdles, and horizontal ladders (Figure 2-2).

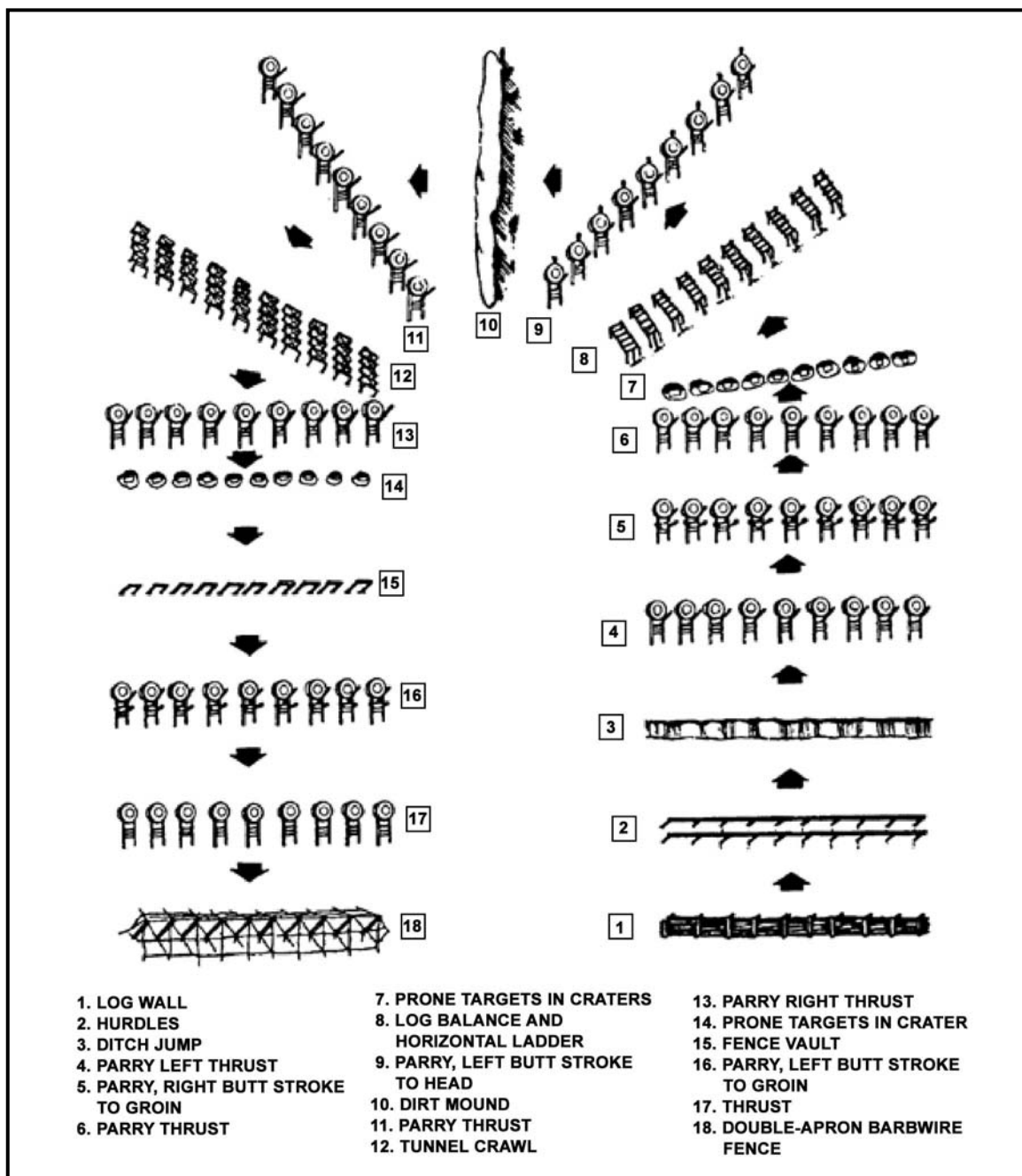


Figure 2-2. Example of nine-lane, 300-meter bayonet assault course.

c. **Targets.** Use a variety of targets to provide experience in different attacks. The local Training and Support Center (TSC) can build the targets. Targets composed of old tires are appropriate as well as the Ivan-type targets used by range control—that is, the E-type silhouette, three-dimensional personnel target (large), FSN 6920-01-164-9625 or the F-type silhouette, three-dimensional personnel target (small), FSN 6920-00-T33-8777.

Targets should be durable but should not damage weapons. Place a sign near each target to indicate the type of attack to be used.

d. **Usage.** An example of how to conduct the bayonet assault course is as follows:

(1) **Task.** Negotiate the bayonet assault course.

(2) **Conditions.** Given nine lanes on a 300-meter bayonet assault course over irregular terrain with four types of targets: thrust; parry thrust target; parry, butt stroke to the groin target; and parry, butt stroke to head target (Figure 2-3). The targets are marked with a sign to indicate the required attack. Given seven types of obstacles as shown in Figures 2-4 through 2-10. Given a soldier in battle dress uniform with load-carrying equipment and a rifle with a fixed bayonet.

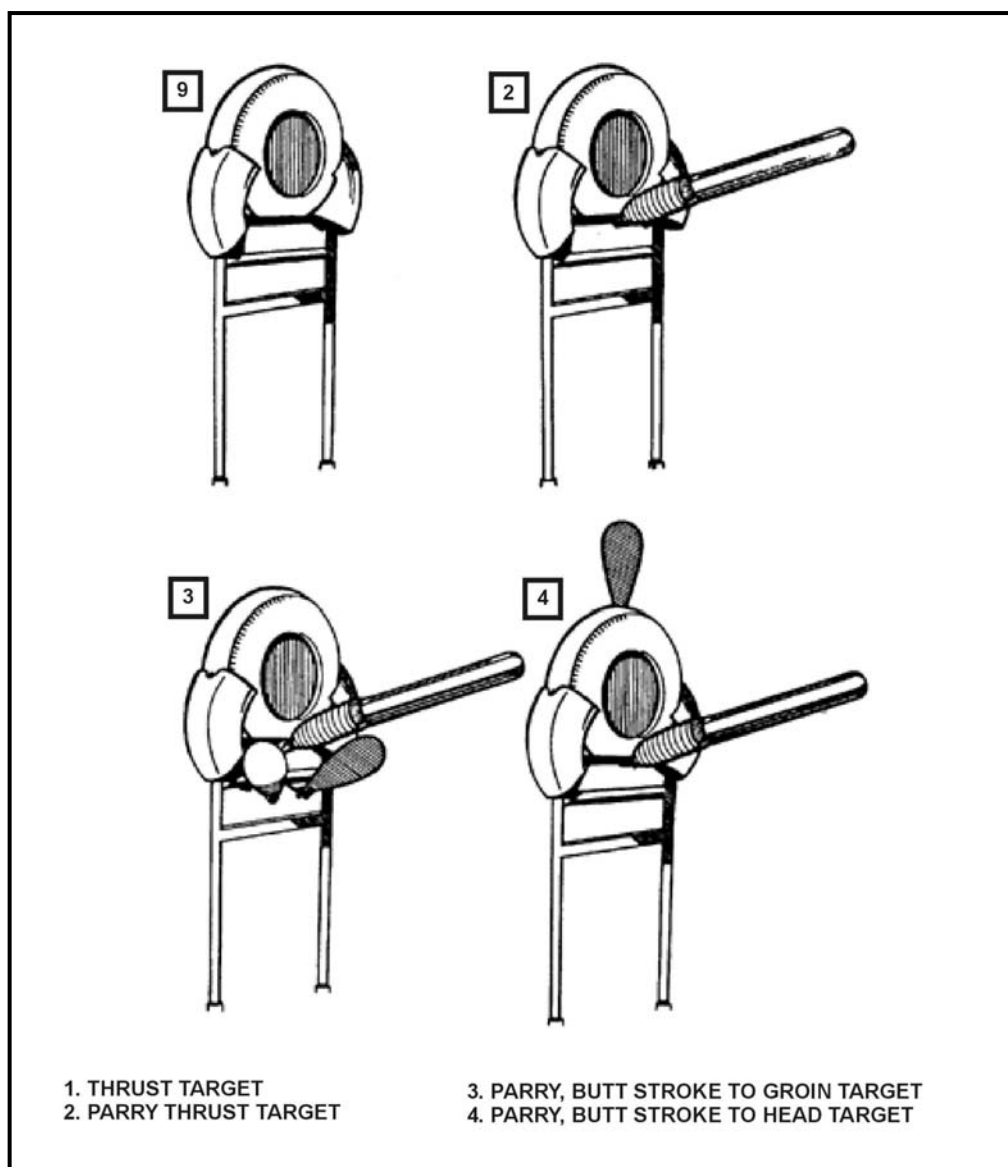


Figure 2-3. Types of targets.

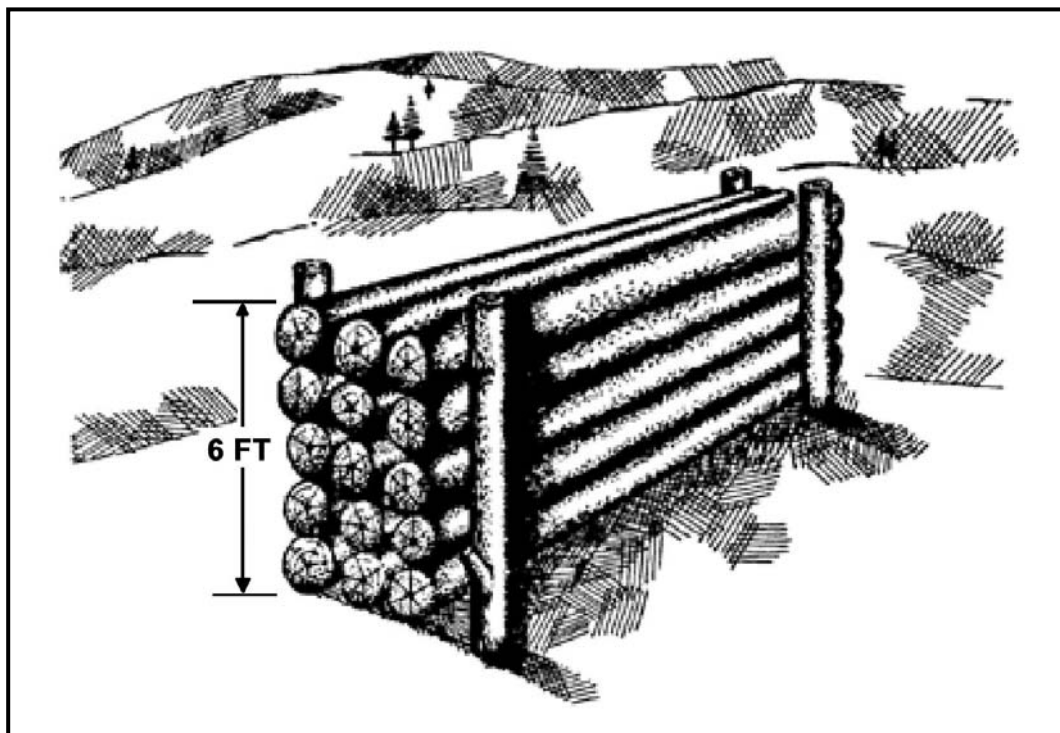


Figure 2-4. Log wall.

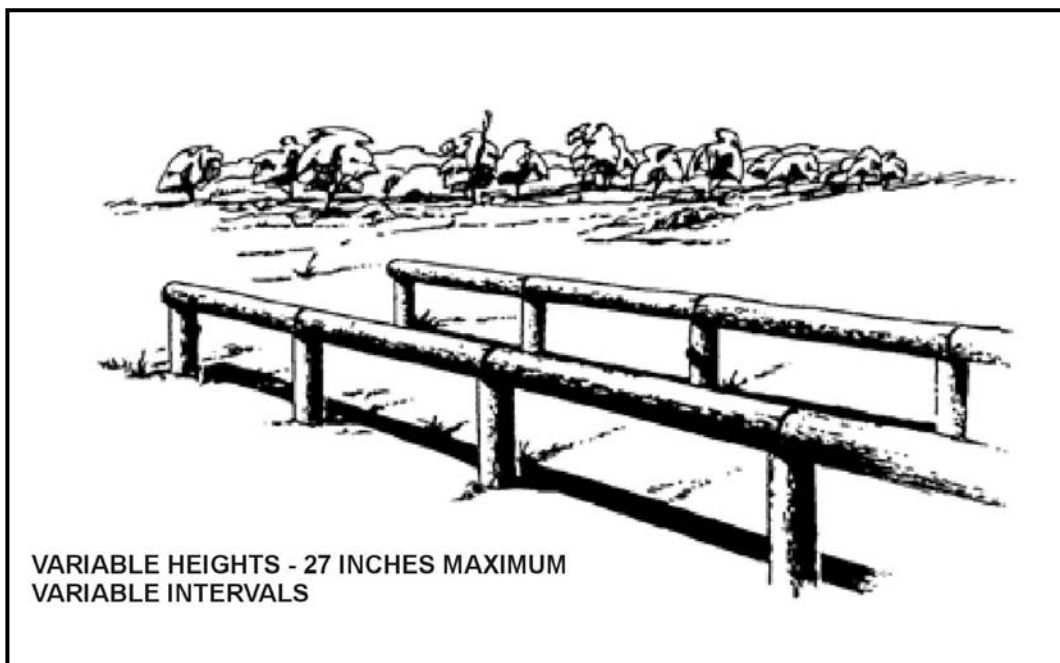


Figure 2-5. Hurdles.



Figure 2-6. Ditch jump.

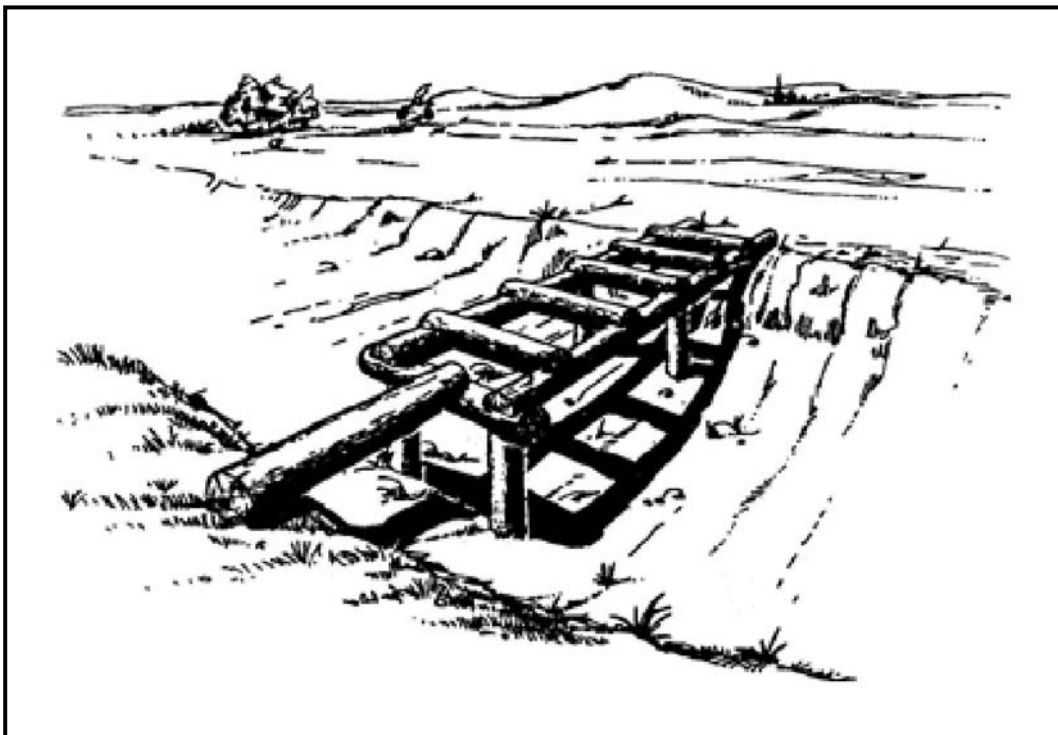


Figure 2-7. Log balance and horizontal ladder.

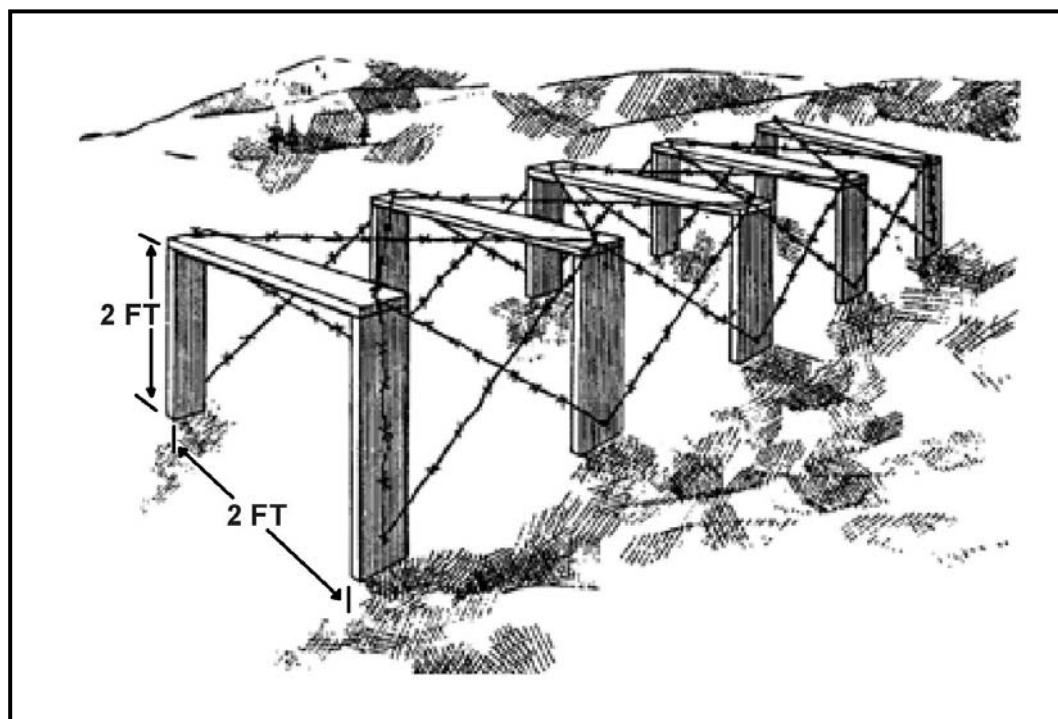


Figure 2-8. Tunnel crawl.

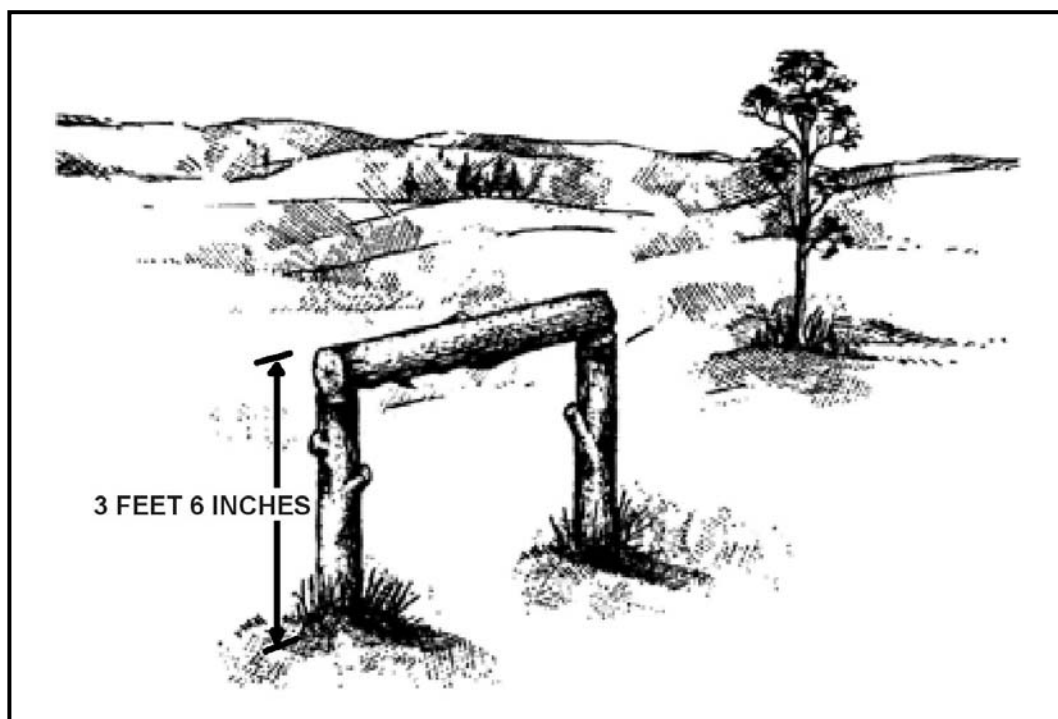


Figure 2-9. Fence vault.

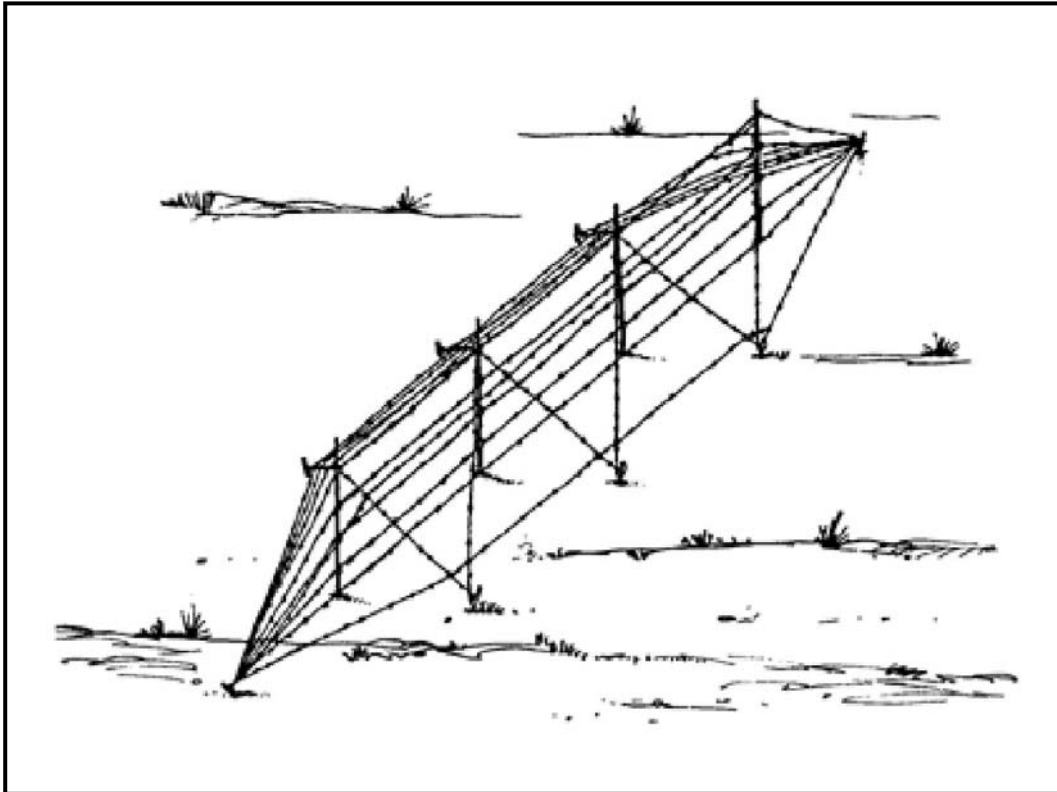


Figure 2-10. Double-apron barbwire fence.

(3) **Standards.** The course must be successfully negotiated by all soldiers in the class with each soldier obtaining kills on 75 percent of the total targets in his lane. The course must be negotiated in 5 minutes or less (about 30 seconds for each 50 meters and time to attack and negotiate obstacles).

WARNING

To avoid injury, instructors ensure that the proper interval is constantly maintained.

Section IV. TEACHING TECHNIQUES

This section discusses a variety of effective teaching techniques to use while conducting combatives training.

2-9. WARM-UPS AND STRETCHES

Before combatives training, the soldier must be prepared for the upcoming physical stress. A warm-up period gradually increases the internal temperature of the body and the heart rate. Stretching prepares the ligaments, tendons, muscles, and heart for a workout, decreasing the chances of injury. After the initial warm-up, training drills can be used to

further warm up. This allows for the maximum use of training time combining a portion of the warm up with building muscle memory, and refining the basic techniques.

a. **Warm-up Exercises.** To begin warm-up exercises, rotate the major joints—neck, shoulders, hips, and knees. The warm-up should include at least 7 to 10 minutes of stretching, running in place or jogging around the training area, and calisthenics. Grass drills and guerrilla exercises are good to use as a warm-up for combatives training. They condition the body through motion in all ranges, accustom the soldiers to contact with the ground, and promote aggressiveness.

b. **Stretching Exercises.** Any of the stretching exercises in FM 21-20 are recommended for hand-to-hand combat training. Five other exercises that increase flexibility in areas of the body that benefit hand-to-hand combat movements are as follows:

(1) ***Backroll Stretch.***

(a) *Position.* Lay on ground on back with legs extended and arms by sides, palms down.

(b) *Action.* Raise legs over head and roll back as far as possible, trying to place toes on the ground behind head. Keep knees locked and feet and knees together; hold for 20 seconds (Figure 2-11). Gradually return to starting position. Repeat two or three times.

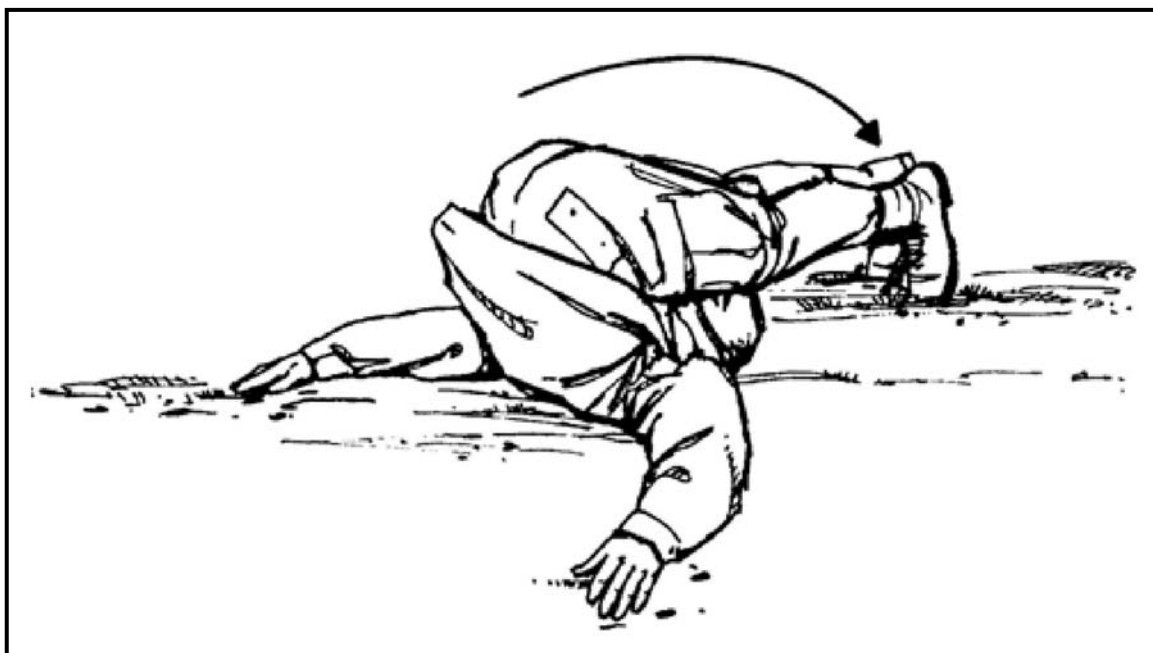


Figure 2-11. Backroll stretch.

(2) ***Buddy-Assisted Splits (Leg Spreader).***

(a) *Position.* Sit on ground facing buddy with legs extended and spread as far as possible. Position feet inside ankles of buddy.

(b) *Action.* Interlock hands with buddy and alternate pulling one toward the other, causing the buddy to bend forward over the hips until a stretch is felt (Figure 2-12). Hold this position for 20 seconds, then alternate and have him pull you into a stretch. Do sequence two or three times.

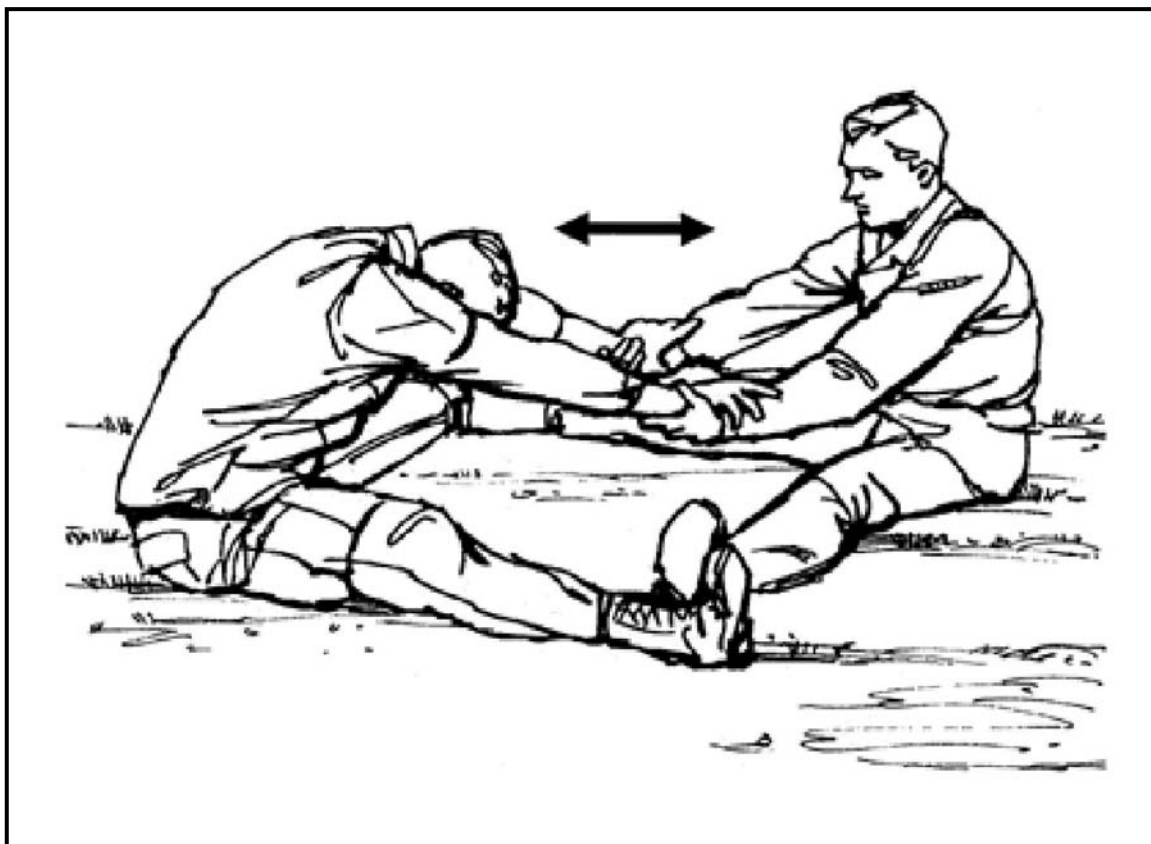


Figure 2-12. Buddy-assisted splits (leg spreader).

(3) ***Buddy-Assisted Hamstring Stretch.***

(a) *Position.* Sit on ground with right leg extended to front and foot pointing up. Bend left leg with sole touching to inside of the right thigh. Have buddy kneel behind you with his hands on your shoulders (Figure 2-13).

(b) *Action.* Slowly bend forward from hips over the right leg and reach your hands toward ankles until stretch is felt (Figure 2-13). Hold this for 10 to 15 seconds. The buddy then applies downward pressure and allows you to adjust your stretch. Hold for 10 to 15 seconds and repeat. Alternate legs and positions after two or three sequences.



Figure 2-13. Buddy-assisted hamstring stretch.

(4) ***Buddy-Assisted Groin (Butterfly) Stretch.***

(a) *Position.* Sit on ground with the soles of your feet together, close to the torso. Hold ankles with hands. Have buddy kneel behind you with his hands on your knees.

(b) *Action.* The buddy places his hands on top of your thighs at the knees. The buddy's weight is supported by your shoulders while little weight is placed on the thighs. Then, the buddy increases downward pressure on your thighs until stretch is felt (Figure 2-14). Hold for 20 seconds, then alternate positions.



Figure 2-14. Buddy-assisted groin (butterfly) stretch.

(5) ***Buddy-Assisted Back Stretch.***

(a) *Position.* Stand back-to-back with buddy and interlock arms at your sides.

(b) *Action.* Bend forward at the waist and pull buddy up on your back over your hips. The buddy allows his back to arch and tells you when an adequate stretch is felt (Figure 2-15). Hold this position for 20 seconds, then, change places.

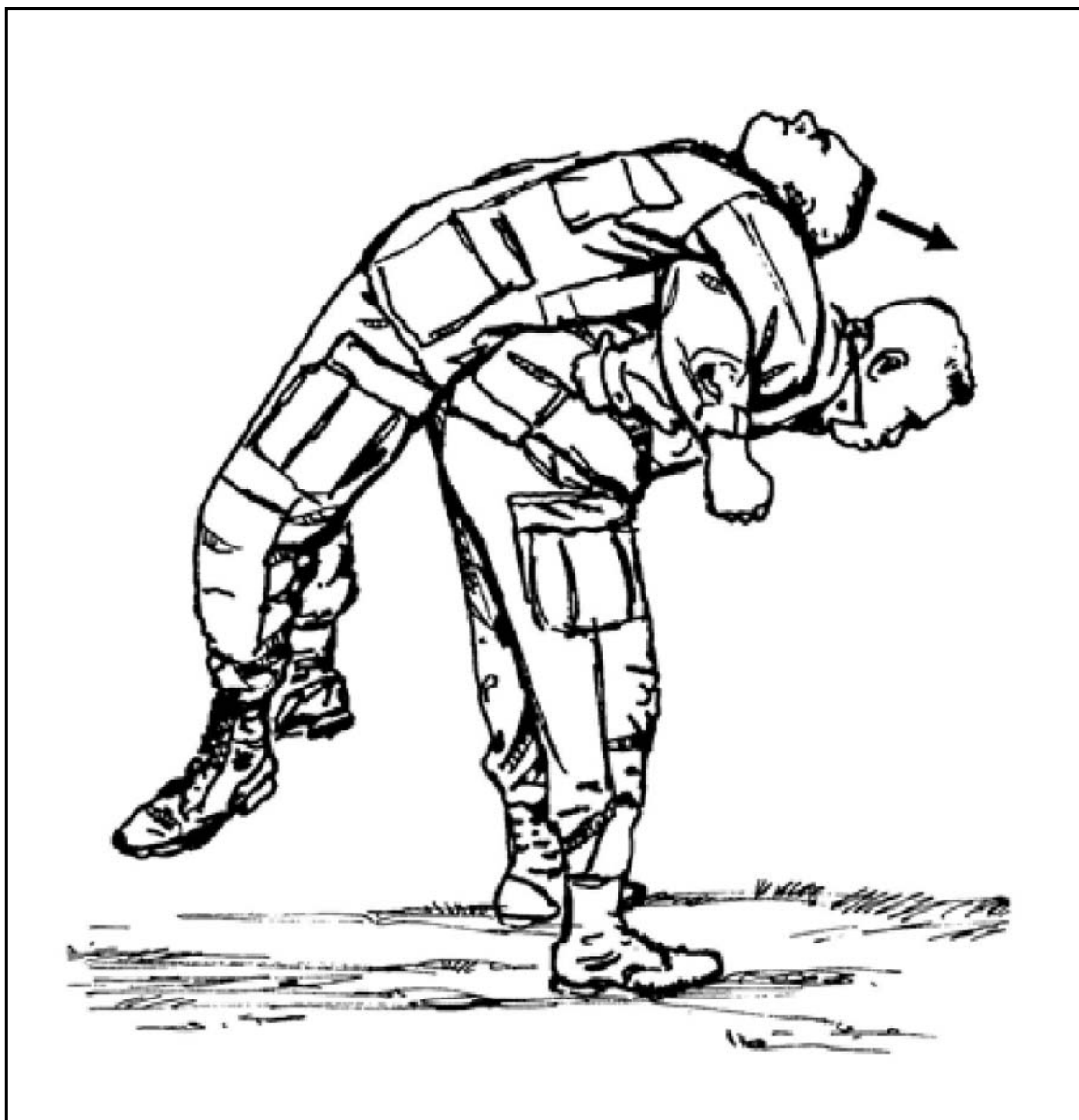


Figure 2-15. Buddy-assisted back stretch.

2-10. CRAWL, WALK, AND RUN

Training can be conducted using the crawl, walk, and run techniques, which may be applied on two levels.

a. **First Level.** The instructors use these techniques during each initial training session.

(1) **Crawl Phase.** New techniques are introduced, taught, demonstrated, and executed by the numbers.

(2) **Walk Phase.** During this phase, soldiers practice the new techniques by the numbers, but with more fluid movement and less instructor guidance.

(3) **Run Phase.** Soldiers execute the techniques at combat speed with supervision.

b. **Second Level.** The instructors use these techniques when developing unit combatives programs. Before conducting combatives training, the instructor considers the abilities and experience level of the soldiers to be trained. During training, those soldiers with prior martial arts experience can be a great asset; they may be used as demonstrators or as assistant instructors. The crawl, walk, run approach to unit training ensures a high skill level throughout the unit and minimizes the risk of training injuries.

(1) **Crawl Phase.** During the crawl phase, the instructor introduces combatives to the unit. Here, the basic skills that set the standards for advancement to other levels are mastered. Emphasis is placed on the basic ground fighting techniques, gradually introducing standup fighting and fight strategy. Studying the new techniques in this method ensures that the movements are correctly programmed into the soldiers' subconscious after a few repetitions.

(2) **Walk Phase.** Once a unit has developed a sufficient proficiency level in basic skills, begin the walk phase. Instructors introduce soldiers to more advanced ground fighting techniques and begin serious training on closing with the enemy and takedowns. Soldiers engage in full sparring and competitive matches.

(3) **Run Phase.** In the run phase, soldiers spar using slaps to represent striking during ground fighting, takedowns are practiced against an opponent with boxing gloves, and scenario driven training such as multiple opponent or restrictive equipment is used.

2-11. DEMONSTRATIONS

A well-coordinated demonstration and professional demonstrators are crucial for successful learning by soldiers. Unrehearsed presentations or inadequately trained demonstrators can immediately destroy the credibility of the training. Two methods are appropriate for demonstrating combative techniques based on the size of the group to be taught.

a. **Company-Size Formation or Larger.** The instructor or demonstrator uses the talk-through method. The primary instructor talks the demonstrators through the techniques by the numbers, and then the demonstrators execute at combat speed. The soldiers can see how to apply the move being taught in relation to the instructor or demonstrator. The primary instructor is free to control the rate of the demonstration and to stress key teaching points. The demonstrators must be skilled in properly applying the techniques so soldiers can adequately grasp the intended concepts.

b. **Platoon-Size Formation or Smaller.** A good method for demonstrating to a smaller formation is for the primary instructor to apply the technique being taught to an

assistant instructor. The primary instructor talks himself through the demonstration. He stresses correct body movement and key teaching points as he does them.

2-12. EXECUTION BY THE NUMBERS

Instructors use execution by the numbers to break techniques down into step-by-step phases so soldiers can clearly see how the movements are developed from start to finish. Execution by the numbers also provides soldiers a way to see the mechanics of each technique. This teaching method allows the instructor to explain in detail the sequence of each movement. For example, on the command PHASE ONE, MOVE, the attacker throws a right-hand punch to the defender's face. At the same time, the defender steps to the inside of the attacker off the line of attack and moves into position for the right-hip throw. Assistant instructors are able to move freely throughout the training formation and make on-the-spot corrections.

2-13. EXECUTION AT COMBAT SPEED

When the instructor is confident that the soldiers being trained are skilled at executing a technique by the numbers, he has them execute it at combat speed. Executing movements at combat speed enables soldiers to see how effective a technique is. This builds the soldier's confidence in the technique, allows him to develop a clear mental picture of the principles behind the technique, and gives him confidence in his ability to perform the technique during an actual attack. For example, the command is, PASS THE GUARD AT COMBAT SPEED, MOVE. The soldiers then execute this technique from start to finish. It is important to remember that combat speed does not always mean very quickly. Speed requires space and space often favors the defender.

2-14. DRILLS

Drills are used to warm up, to reinforce the importance of dominant body position, and to perfect soldiers' basic skills through repetition. During these drills, basic positional techniques are repeated at the beginning of each training session with a different detail emphasized each session. In this way the emphasis is kept on perfecting the basic techniques, while at the same time making the best use of limited training time.

2-15. TRAINING PADS AND OTHER PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Training pads are highly recommended to enhance training (Figure 2-16, page 2-20). They allow full-forced strikes by soldiers and protect their training partners. Although striking is an inefficient way to end a fight, it is a very important part of a fight. Pads enable soldiers to feel the effectiveness of striking techniques and to develop power in their striking. Instructors should encourage spirited aggressiveness. Pads can be tackle dummy pads or martial arts striking pads. Training pads can be requisitioned through supply channels or purchased locally.

- a. The use of pads is especially recommended for knee-strike practice drills, and kicking drills. Ideally, the pad is placed on the outside of the training partner's thigh, protecting the common peroneal nerve. Pads can also be held against the forearms in front of the head and face to allow practice of knee or elbow strikes to this area.

- b. Other protective equipment, such as shin guards, can also be useful to practice with improvised weapons.

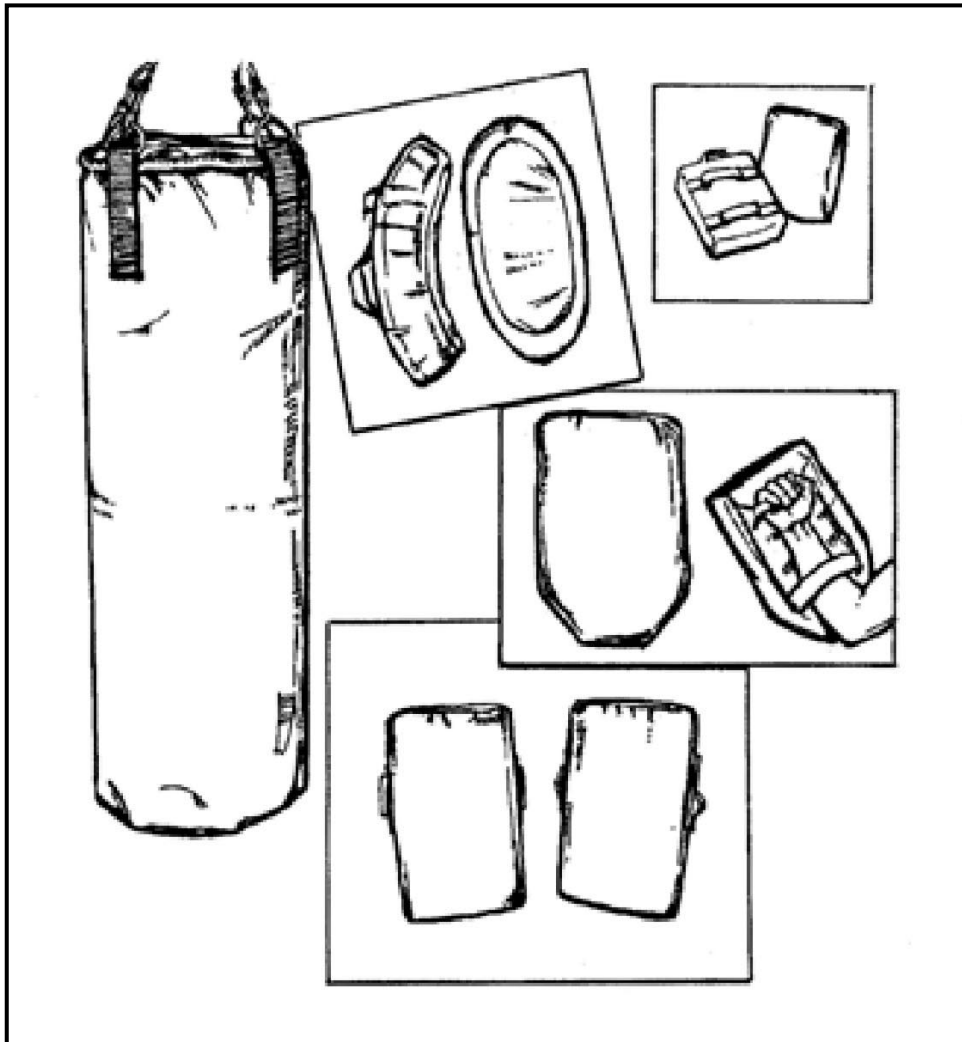


Figure 2-16. Training pads.